

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Formally Publishes the Standard on ODR

Diversified Dispute Resolution Mechanism WeChat Public Account – Issue 584:

Editor's Note

In March 2025, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) officially released the ODR standard. Professor Fang Xuhui(Michael) from Nanchang University, Jiangxi, who has been engaged in long-term research on Online Dispute Resolution (ODR), has provided a summary translation of the English version of the standard. Additionally, he highlights China's significant role in shaping the ISO ODR standard and emphasizes the need for active exploration of Generative AI applications and challenges in the ODR field to build a more efficient and trustworthy ODR ecosystem.

By Fang Xuhui (Michael)

In March 2025, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) officially released ISO 32122:2025 (referred to as the "ISO Standard on ODR"), titled “Transaction assurance in E-commerce — Guidance for offering online dispute resolution services”. The release of this standard marks a new stage in the field of global online dispute resolution (ODR), providing a unified technical framework and operational guidelines for resolving cross-border e-commerce disputes. Furthermore, ISO 32122 establishes principles, technical recommendations, and operational manuals for cross-border dispute resolution, improving the efficiency and enforceability of dispute resolution while offering protection measures for both consumers and businesses. Although the ISO Standard on ODR does not specifically address generative AI, including large language models (LLMs), the principles of fairness, transparency, security, and privacy protection established in this standard serve as references and guidance for AI-driven ODR services. By adhering to these core ISO requirements, AI-powered ODR systems can enhance security, privacy protection, and ethical governance. Through the implementation of these frameworks, ODR platforms can effectively mitigate the risks of AI hallucinations, unauthorized data access, and cloud security vulnerabilities, fostering a safer and more trustworthy digital dispute resolution ecosystem. As one of ISO's 173 member countries and the world's largest e-commerce market, China played a crucial role in the development of this standard, demonstrating its technological innovation and practical experience in the ODR field.

I. The core content of ISO 32122:2025 (Translation and Summary) is as follows:

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

ISO draws attention to the possibility that the implementation of this document may involve the use of (a) patent(s). ISO takes no position concerning the evidence, validity or applicability of any claimed patent rights in respect thereof. As of the date of publication of this document, ISO had not received notice of (a) patent(s) which may be required to implement this document. However, implementers are cautioned that this may not represent the latest information, which may be obtained from the patent database available at www.iso.org/patents. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 321, Transaction assurance in E-commerce.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

E-commerce has drastically increased globally. Wide use of e-commerce has increased the number of related disputes, including cross-border ones.

At the time of dispute, traditional litigation or traditional in-person alternative dispute resolution (ADR) cannot substantially resolve the disputes, including cross-border ones. In other words, transaction assurance in e-commerce cannot be achieved with traditional litigation or traditional in-person ADR, including for cross-border disputes. Online dispute resolution (ODR) has been gradually and widely used for e-commerce related disputes until now.

The safety and fairness of ODR are also important considerations, regardless if the ODR service was provided by an e-commerce operator or an outsourced ODR provider in order to be able to be used in a “real world setting”, including that it should not impose high costs, delays and burdens that are disproportionate to the economic value at stake. These are important factors in the assessment of a good e-commerce operator for all the stakeholders involved in e-commerce.

This document provides guidance for offering safe, fair, accessible and effective ODR services. E-commerce operators can easily know what conditions are needed as a safe and fair ODR service, and thereby customers can find more e-commerce operators which provide the safe and fair ODR service.

This document has been developed with reference to available documentation relating to ODR service in e-commerce.

1. Scope

This document gives guidance on online dispute resolution (ODR) for e-commerce transactions including basic principles of ODR, technical recommendations and operational manuals to e-commerce operators (including e-commerce platform operators) which aim to develop their own ODR service and ODR providers that are outsourced by e-commerce operators.

NOTE This document is particularly useful for disputes arising out of cross-border, low-value e-commerce transactions. This document can apply to disputes arising out of both goods and service contracts.

2. Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 32110, Transaction assurance in E-commerce — Vocabulary

3. Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 32110 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>

— IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1 ODR provider

online dispute resolution provider

entity that administers and coordinates online dispute resolution (ODR) proceedings, including where appropriate, by administering an ODR platform

Note 1 to entry: An e-commerce operator or e-commerce platform operator can serve as an ODR provider.

3.2 ODR platform

online dispute resolution platform

online mechanism for generating, sending, receiving, storing, exchanging or otherwise processing communications

3.3 ODR system

online dispute resolution system

entity involved in implementing, hosting or providing online dispute resolution services and platforms

Note 1 to entry: An ODR system can be provided by an ODR provider or an outsourced ODR systems vendor.

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II. China's Contribution to the ISO 32122:2025 Standard

1. The ISO Standard on ODR is a standard developed by ISO/TC 321, for which China serves as the secretariat

China played a significant role in the development of the ISO 32122:2025 standard, mainly in the following aspects:

The ISO 32122:2025 standard was developed by ISO/TC 321, a technical committee under the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), with China serving as the secretariat. ISO/TC 321 was established in 2018 as the Technical Committee on E-Commerce Transaction Assurance under ISO, with China acting as the secretariat. The Hangzhou Institute of Standardization serves as the host organization of the ISO/TC 321 secretariat, coordinating standardization efforts among global member countries. This committee focuses on standardizing e-commerce transaction assurance, formulating standards to enhance the credibility and reliability of e-commerce transactions. One of the key standards developed by ISO/TC 321 is ISO 32122:2025 – “Transaction assurance in E-commerce — Guidance for offering online dispute resolution services”. This standard provides guidance on online dispute resolution (ODR) for e-commerce transactions, covering fundamental ODR principles, technical recommendations, and operational manuals for e-commerce operators and ODR service providers. In summary, ISO/TC 321 is the technical committee responsible for drafting e-commerce transaction assurance standards, with ISO 32122:2025 being one of the standards specifically addressing guidelines for online dispute resolution services. Experts from Hangzhou Institute of Standardization, Shenzhen Institute of Standardization, and Zhejiang University actively participated in drafting and discussing the ISO 32122 ODR standard. Overall, China has made significant contributions to the international standardization of ODR within ISO.

2. China’s Contribution to the UNCITRAL Technical Notes on Online Dispute Resolution Referenced by ISO

The UNCITRAL Technical Notes on Online Dispute Resolution (hereinafter referred to as the "Technical Notes on ODR ") is a document adopted by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) that addresses e-commerce dispute resolution. It holds great significance in resolving online transaction disputes and promoting the healthy development of global e-commerce. China has made its voice heard in the formulation of international rules. With the support of the Chinese delegation, an observer appointed by the Chinese Society of Private International Law proposed the inclusion of "security" as a key element in the Technical Notes on ODR, which was ultimately accepted. Colin Rule, widely regarded as the "Godfather of ODR," praised this suggestion as China’s contribution to the world

during the 2017 International Mediation Summit in Hangzhou.
http://www.hancheng.gov.cn/info/content.jsp?info_id=58182&tm_id=216.

After the adoption of the UNCITRAL document, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce sent a letter of congratulations, stating: "China's proposal has come to fruition, benefiting from the country's thriving e-commerce practices. Through the joint efforts of experts and scholars over six years, China has successfully balanced the interests of the U.S. and Europe, coordinated various stakeholders, and led UNCITRAL Working Group III to reach a consensus document based on China's proposal for cross-border e-commerce ODR solutions." Moreover, China took the lead in localizing the Technical Notes on ODR. In October 2016, the Belt and Road International Commercial Mediation Center launched an online mediation system, becoming the first in China to introduce international commercial ODR. It has also incorporated the Technical Notes on ODR into its mediation rules. www.bnrsc.com.

3. China's Contribution to the ICODR Standards Referenced by ISO

The National Center for Technology and Dispute Resolution (NCTDR) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass-Amherst) and the International Council for Online Dispute Resolution (ICODR) jointly released the ODR Standards in May 2022. These standards cover the application of artificial intelligence (AI) technology and have been incorporated into ISO standards. <https://icodr.org/files/simpchinese.pdf>. As early as 2016, NCTDR hosted the 16th International Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Forum in Beijing. Officials from institutions such as the Supreme People's Court of China, the Ministry of Commerce, the State Administration for Industry and Commerce, and the Shenzhen Institute of Standardization attended the conference and delivered speeches. The 16th ODR Forum resulted in the "Beijing Consensus," which played a crucial role in shaping and refining ODR standards. In 2024, NCTDR organized the 27th ODR Cyberweek and introduced a China-focused session. The unique aspect of this session was that it featured experts not only from mainland China but also from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, presenting the Chinese approach to ODR to the global community. This helped enhance the feasibility and international influence of the ICODR ODR Standards. https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/oBh0U_h9543EQanAf9-fSA.

III. The Rapid Development of ODR in China Has Driven the Formation of ISO Standards

With the rapid growth of e-commerce, Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) has been widely adopted in China. The Chinese government attaches great importance to the development of ODR, viewing it as a key tool for optimizing the business environment and protecting consumer rights. China's ODR practices not only provide an efficient and convenient dispute resolution mechanism for the domestic e-commerce market but also contribute valuable experience to the development of global ODR standards.

1. Technology-Driven Dispute Resolution

China has been at the forefront of applying artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and big data to ODR, enabling intelligent and automated dispute resolution.

- Alibaba’s “Public Jury Review” mechanism and JD.com’s “Smart Customer Service” system have significantly improved the efficiency and fairness of dispute resolution through technology.
- PKU Law (Beida Fabao) plays a crucial role in supporting ODR platforms with its extensive legal data resources and intelligent technologies. It provides authoritative, real-time, and structured legal data, helping AI models reduce hallucinations and improve the accuracy and reliability of generated content.
https://www.pkulaw.com/law?channel=SEM-baidu-beidafabao&bd_vid=12325726284768905588

2. Exploration of Cross-Border Dispute Resolution

With the rapid expansion of cross-border e-commerce, China has actively explored cross-border ODR solutions.

- The Hangzhou Internet Court launched an online dispute resolution platform for cross-border e-commerce, providing efficient legal services for global consumers and merchants.

3. Policy Support and Standardization Efforts

The Chinese government has introduced a series of policy documents to promote the standardization and regulation of ODR.

- The E-Commerce Law of China explicitly requires e-commerce platforms to establish dispute resolution mechanisms, providing a legal foundation for ODR.
- The Shenzhen Zhongxin E-Commerce Transaction Security Promotion Center pioneered research on ODR mechanisms in China and developed systematic operational standards for online ODR services. [Source](https://www.globalodr.com/AboutUS/EntIntroduce) <https://www.globalodr.com/AboutUS/EntIntroduce>.

4. APEC ODR Platform and Its Global Influence

China’s APEC ODR platform provides internationally recognized online dispute resolution services, enhancing the credibility and reliability of cross-border e-commerce transactions.

- In January 2021, the Guangzhou Arbitration Commission (GZAC) launched the world’s first APEC-ODR platform, making China the first among APEC’s 21 member economies to establish a platform fully compliant with the Model Procedural Rules for the APEC Collaborative Framework for ODR of Cross-Border B2B Disputes. The platform is linked through APEC’s official website, offering a one-stop online dispute resolution service for cross-border commercial disputes.

- The China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC) actively participated in APEC's ODR framework and officially launched its APEC ODR platform in 2022, integrating negotiation, mediation, and arbitration into a single online dispute resolution system.
- In February 2025, the Beijing Arbitration Commission (BAC) officially launched its APEC ODR platform, showcasing China's technological capabilities in ODR and providing an efficient and convenient solution for global cross-border dispute resolution.

These ODR platforms follow the Model Procedural Rules for the APEC Collaborative Framework for ODR of Cross-Border B2B Disputes, which has attracted significant attention from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). During the development of ISO ODR standards, ISO referenced the Model Procedural Rules.

In summary, China's rapid development of ODR has played a crucial role in driving the formation of ISO standards, contributing both technical expertise and practical experience to the global standardization of online dispute resolution.

IV. Seizing Opportunities from ISO Standards and Proactively Addressing the Challenges of Generative AI

The release of the ISO 32122:2025 standard provides a unified framework and guiding principles for global e-commerce dispute resolution, with China playing a crucial role in shaping and refining the global ODR (Online Dispute Resolution) system. Looking ahead, China should leverage its technological innovations and practical experience to actively participate in the development and promotion of international standards, contributing to the healthy growth of global e-commerce.

As ODR standards become more internationalized, China must also deepen cooperation with other countries and regions to facilitate the mutual recognition and enforcement of cross-border dispute resolutions. This will enhance the fairness and efficiency of the ODR system, providing trustworthy solutions for global consumers and merchants.

Beyond e-commerce disputes, the impact of ISO 32122:2025 extends across the entire ODR sector, particularly in addressing challenges related to Generative AI (GenAI). One of the most pressing issues is the "hallucination" phenomenon in large language models (LLM) —where AI generates inaccurate or fabricated information, potentially affecting the reliability and credibility of ODR systems.

To tackle this challenge, ISO 32122:2025 can serve as a foundation for establishing regulatory and technical guidelines for AI-driven ODR, ensuring that AI-generated content is accurate and reliable. The following strategies can help achieve this :

1. Enhancing Data Quality and Optimizing Model Training

- AI models used in ODR systems must be trained on high-quality, real-world data to minimize hallucinations.
- Multi-source data validation mechanisms should be integrated into training processes to ensure content accuracy.

2. Implementing Real-Time Monitoring and Error Correction

- ODR systems should incorporate real-time monitoring and error detection mechanisms to identify and correct AI-generated inaccuracies promptly.
- Human oversight or AI-assisted review tools should verify the generated content, ensuring reliable decision-making.

3. Increasing Transparency and Explainability

- AI-powered ODR systems must ensure transparency in dispute resolution, clarifying the reasoning and logic behind AI-generated content.
- Users should be able to understand the decision-making process and have the ability to challenge or appeal unjust outcomes.

4. Building a User Feedback and Continuous Optimization System

- A robust user feedback mechanism should be established to regularly collect and analyze user evaluations of AI-based dispute resolution outcomes.
- This feedback should be used to refine AI models, reduce hallucinations, and improve the credibility and effectiveness of AI-driven dispute resolution.

Conclusion

The release of ISO 32122:2025 marks a new phase in global e-commerce dispute resolution, providing a standardized framework that enhances the efficiency and reliability of ODR while also offering guidance for the regulated application of AI in the field.

China played a key role in developing this standard, showcasing its technological expertise and practical experience in ODR while contributing to global innovations in dispute resolution. Moving forward, China should continue to lead the evolution of ODR, promoting intelligent, standardized, and globalized dispute resolution mechanisms. Additionally, China should actively explore the safe, transparent, and fair application of Generative AI in ODR, ultimately building a more efficient and trustworthy Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) ecosystem.

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